

I want to thank, first and foremost, Hillary for leading this effort, which has already accomplished so much, from restoring the Star-Spangled Banner to honoring our great artists, thinkers, and scientists. I look forward to walking on some of those 2,000 Millennium Trails we'll build together, and to naming more and more Millennium Communities.

We can all take pride in our efforts to renew our national treasures, for in a larger sense, the story of our Nation is the story of constant renewal, the realization that we preserve the ideals embodied in these documents not simply by revering them but by reaffirming our commitment to them. Each generation must widen the circle of opportunity, deepen the meaning of freedom, and strengthen the bonds of our community.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." We fought a war of revolution to make those words real in 1776. We rededicated ourselves to that proposition in 1863, recognizing that the bright words of the Declaration could not abide the stain of slavery or endure the breaking of our Union. We rededicated ourselves at the coming of the industrial age, when we recognized that new measures were required to protect and advance equal opportunity and freedom. We rededicated ourselves again in 1920, when we ratified the 19th amendment, granting women the right to vote. We saved those ideals in World War II and for millions upon millions of people in the cold war. We rededicated ourselves again in 1963, hearing and heeding Dr. King's dream that one day, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners would one day sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

Today, at the coming of the information age, we rededicate ourselves yet again. Thank God our challenges are not those of depression or war, but those brought on by this hopeful and remarkable explosion in technology, by the globalization of our economy, by all the changes in the way we work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world.

To keep our ideals alive, we must embrace new ideas and follow a new course. Because we believe equal opportunity in 1999 is just

as important as it was in 1776, we must rededicate ourselves to the truest guarantor of that opportunity, a world-class educational system that benefits every single child.

Because we believe the Federal Government must promote the general welfare, as our Founders instructed, we are dedicated to using its resources to pay squarely our single, greatest challenge as a nation today, the aging of America, and to do so in a way that pays off our national debt for the first time since 1835.

Because we believe every human being has the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and no one should be discriminated against, uprooted, abused, or killed because of his or her race or ethnic background or religion, we are proud to stand with our Allies in defense of these ideals in Kosovo.

It is natural for any American contemplating the documents behind me to look upon those who crafted them as almost superhuman in their wisdom and the times that they lived as a golden age. But the more you read about them, the more you respect their achievement because the Founders were not gods on Earth; they were farmers and lawyers, printers and merchants, surveyors and soldiers, chosen by their constituents to hash out divergent interests and make difficult decisions about the future—to engage, in other words, in politics.

I said at my alma mater, Georgetown, last week, that at its best, politics is about values, ideas, and action. That's what they were about. They turned politics into public service and made it a noble endeavor and left us a framework to keep it going. The Declaration and the Constitution emerged only after fierce debate and difficult compromise. Today, these documents enjoy universal acclaim. And at the time they were written, believe it or not, many Americans—though, thank goodness not a majority—actually did not agree with them.

Yet, the Framers refused to let serious differences of opinion become excuses to put off action. They overcame their differences and completed their tasks and stayed true to an idea that Jefferson would later express in his first Inaugural, that every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle.

We have to keep that idea in mind today. The greatest threat to our democracy today, and certainly to freedom and democracy around the world, is the poisonous idea that what divides us is far more important than what we have in common; that as long as we have differences of opinion, we must have personal animosities, and we cannot have positive action. This is a dubious political strategy, a dangerous governing strategy, wrong as a matter of historical fact, and an affront to the sacred documents we gather here to save.

Despite their many differences, the Framers drafted, debated, and signed the Declaration of Independence in less than a month. They drafted, debated, and approved the Constitution in less than 5 months. If they could produce those enduring charters of freedom in a matter of months, surely there is no reason why we here in our time cannot make major progress in the remaining months of this millennium, to prepare our Nation for the new millennium and a 21st century which I am convinced will be America's best days.

We owe it to these children to honor their past, to imagine their future, and to build a bridge to that future every single one of them can cross. So as we preserve the documents that launched this, the greatest journey in freedom and opportunity in all of history, let us resolve to do all we can to keep alive the spirit that got us to this point. These children will do the rest.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:55 p.m. in the Rotunda at the National Archives. In his remarks, he referred to C. Michael Armstrong, chairman and chief executive officer, AT&T; and students Jasmine Smith, Kevin Su, and Nora Skelly, who read passages from the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## **Statement on Export Controls on High-Performance Computers and Semiconductors**

*July 1, 1999*

Today I am announcing reforms to the administration's export controls on high-performance computers (HPC) and semiconductors. These policies will strengthen America's high-tech competitiveness, while maintaining controls that are needed to maintain our national security.

These reforms are needed because of the extraordinarily rapid rate of technological change in the computer industry. The number-crunching ability of a supercomputer that once filled a room and cost millions of dollars is now available in an inexpensive desktop computer. Computers that are widely used by businesses and can be manufactured by European, Japanese, and Asian companies will soon exceed the limits that I established on high-performance computers in 1996. These business computers have become commodities, and next year U.S. and foreign vendors are expected to sell 5 million of them.

Maintaining these controls would hurt U.S. exports without benefiting our national security. Moreover, a strong, vibrant high-tech industry is in America's national security interests. That is why I have decided to raise the licensing threshold of high-performance computers to so-called "Tier 2" and "Tier 3" countries. For "Tier 3" countries, which present the greatest risk from a national security viewpoint, the administration will continue its policy of maintaining a lower threshold for military end-users than civilian end-users. I have also directed my national security and economic advisers to provide me with recommendations to update our export controls every 6 months.

Due to legislation passed by the Congress in 1997, this change will require congressional approval and a 6-month period before it can go into effect. I will work with the Congress to pass legislation that would reduce this period to one month, so that we